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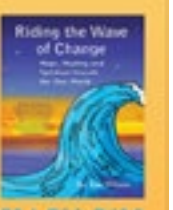

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Carol Karr
Bill Zirinsky

Born during the pandemic, *The Crazy Wisdom Monthly* seeks to represent the voices of our community in a timely and entertaining manner. We welcome articles, interviews, recipes, wisdom, personal essays, poetry, breathing exercises, beautiful art and photos, favorite places for walks, news of your dogs, or musings on current events. Send your submission to Jennifer@crazywisdom.net.

Word of the Month

Wayfinder

a deeply intuitive person who has the courage to navigate through the chaos of darkness and division, who refuses to accept the dysfunction of the current status quo, and who devotes their life to exploring a more joyful, harmonious, coperative, creative, and sustainable existence on Earth.

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On the Cover

Dianna Rhyan is a mythologist and therapist who studies nature goddesses, submerged voices, and the spirituality of sacred landscapes. Read her essay on Sacred Oak and Dove on page 6.

The spring issue of *The CW Journal* will soon be here!

The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal

issue 89

Features

- Judy Ramsey Shamanic Practitioner & Animal Communicator
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Sacred Oak and Dove: The Ancient Oracle of Dodona

By Dianna Rhyan

From distant Dodona sojourners come back bearing oracles:

omens of wise bird-sayings.

(Hesiodic Catalogue)

Far away in the mists of ancient days, there once dwelt a band of extraordinary trees with the gift of prophecy: oaks with the power of human speech, answering the needs of mortals who journeyed far to seek their wise counsel. This sounds like a folk tale, but it is not. Deeply rooted in archaic Greek myth, these oaks also lived in history as the first and only oracle existing in Greece for many years. Ancient mythographers remembered the priestesses who tended these oaks as the first females on earth who ever sang their own compositions; their companion nymphs were compassionate nurses for Zeus, shielding him in his vulnerable infancy, and henceforth revealing his will to mortals. In the remote and mountainous terrain of Epirus in northwest Greece, from the second millennium BCE, this sacred forest grew in the mystical sanctuary of Dodona.

There once was a vast grove,

fair and goddess-beloved,

spreading far and wide, thickly forested,

abundant with trees.

Inside grew lofty pines, mighty elms, and stately oaks,

fertile wild pears, and blushing sweet apples.

Here flowed rivulets, streams shining bright.

(Callimachus, Hymn to Demeter)

Imagine the scene: divinities gather here, fair as the trees. Nature spirits move among them. Under flickering leaves, immortals offer the refreshment of pure water and the abundance of tender fruit, drawing us closer toward the elemental.

As the Roman naturalist Pliny the Elder understood,

Trees were considered sacred precincts and temples of forest divinities in primordial times. Even today, country folk, preserving simpler, purer, and older rituals, will consecrate their most majestic tree to a goddess or god.…We are still struck with adoration and awe by a glade of trees, a sacred grove veiled in utter silence.

(Natural History)

The majestic oaks of Dodona were primordial and did inspire awe, yet they did not stand veiled in silence. On the contrary, they spoke in divination. Archaeologists have unearthed and deciphered travelers' questions and the oracle's answers, in the form of messages incised on strips of lead. Sometimes the case was desperate and the journey remote. Whether seekers asked about fruitful crops, freedom from slavery, childbearing, unsolved mysteries, or safe emigration, the oaks answered offering resolution in their replies.

Ancient myths remember such encounters. The hero Achilles prayed to Zeus of the oak grove through the mediation of unusual priests:

Zeus, lord of Dodona, living in faraway land,

you keep watch over the sacred precinct where your priests reside,

living among the oaks and sleeping on the ground with feet unwashed.

Hear me.

(Iliad)

These priests were barefoot mountain dwellers who slept unsheltered amongst the trees dreaming in conscious contact with the ground. Their practices suggest spiritual union with the oaks' chthonic power rooted deep inside the earth. They lived humbly, and why not? Surely oaks are unpretentious votaries to grand officials. Likewise, some said the priestesses of the sanctuary lived inside the hollow of an oak, or even in a stump, suggesting enormous, wizened trees as shrines or habitations. An ancient truth is afoot here: unassuming wayfarers who shied away from thronged, wealthy temples entered tranquil groves for simpler, rustic, hushed communion with the divine.

The archetypal traveler Odysseus was rumored to seek out this oracle on his far-flung wanderings when he consulted an oak that spoke with countless leafy tongues:

The hero has journeyed to Dodona, to hear the prophecy of Zeus,

the voice of the holy oak whose tongues are a thousand leaves.

He seeks to learn how he could manage to return home,

having been away, assumed dead, for too many dangerous years.

(Odyssey)

When the exiled heroine Io roamed the world as a cow-maiden, the trees helped her make sense of her experience.

Maiden, you have wandered and endured as far as steep Dodona,

where grows the oracular grove of Zeus.

There the oaks endowed with human voice,

a portent beyond hope,

in clear and certain speech, no riddling words,

hailed you as a destined consort of Zeus.

(Aeschylus, Prometheus Bound)

Even Herakles, paragon of might, submitted to their prophetic guidance:

The final completion to the labors of Herakles,

crafted by the gods, he heard for himself at Dodona:

the ancient oak of many tongues and many voices

foretold his fate, speaking through the oak priestesses,

in the form of twin doves of the wood.

(Sophocles, Women of Trachis)

What did Odysseus, Io, Herakles, and other supplicants hear? An oak spirit sighing in archaic boughs, fluttering birds concealed in rustling leaves, or murmured syllables from mystic priestesses? Essences mingle to express archaic powers mingling on the sacred site. **The oak-dwelling doves especially draw attention here, for they represent the epiphany of the primeval Earth goddess in bird form.** She loved to swoop free in flight and relished bird epiphanies. She was a winged traveler to the limits of the ocean, mother of monsters, bringer of youthful blossoming, bearer of the day of doom, and mistress of fecund animals. Bird imagery is intuitive; it cannot be grasped. Her bird and tree forms invite us to reflect on the doves of Dodona, as they nestled in deep-leaved, deep-bosomed holy oaks.

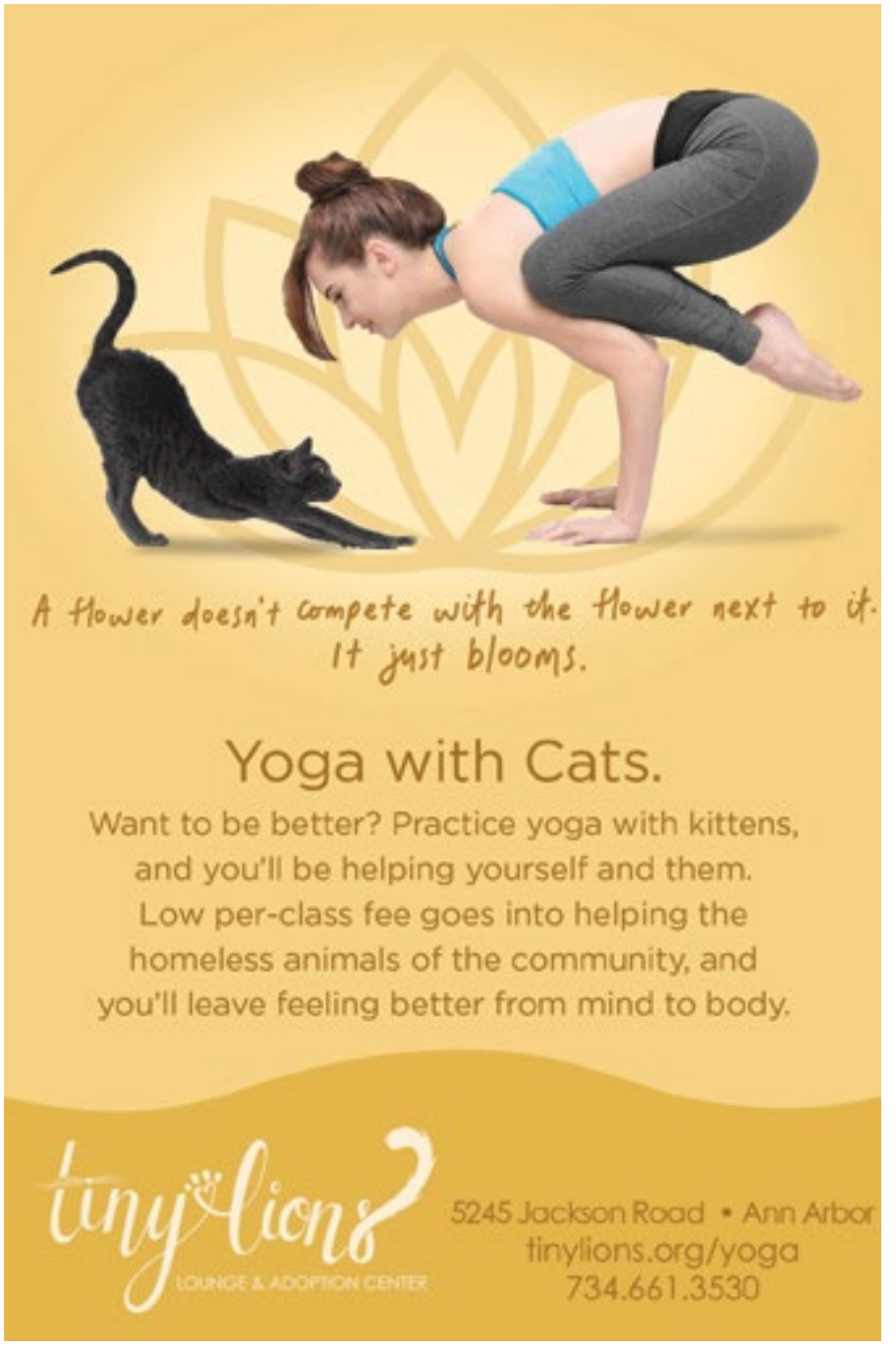
For supplicants in need, to seek prophetic ritual from afar was a sacred journey: a pilgrimage undertaken in search of spiritual insight. Could an archaic oracle be a guide for our own footsteps in search of oak wisdom or dove intuition?

Travelers did not find Dodona only in myth. The historian Herodotus wrote a description of his ancient journey to Dodona in search of prophetic oaks and doves. His eyewitness account brings to life the priestesses who walked the whispering sanctuary, for he met the grove dwellers in person, and they spoke to him there. To him, the priestesses carefully imparted the fruits of their own tradition:

> The prophetesses of Dodona say there were two black doves who flew from Thebes in Egypt…and one arrived among the priestesses in Dodona, seating herself upon an oak tree. She pronounced in a human voice that in this very place, an oracle of Zeus was to arise. Those who heard her comprehended that this was a divine message, and they carried out what the dove proclaimed. The priestesses of Dodona told me this account…and the women who led the way in prophecy and served the sacred grove were called Doves."
>
> *(Herodotus, Histories)*

Read the rest of the article online!

*This contemplation of Dodona is based on a chapter of Dianna Rhyan's new book M*estra the Shapeshifter: Ancient Heroine of the Sacred Grove*, from Moon Books. Rhyan is a mythologist and therapist who studies nature goddesses, submerged voices, and the spirituality of sacred landscapes. Join Ryhan at Crazy Wisdom on Wednesday, May 28th for an author event! More info will be listed in* The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal *calendar of events on May 1.*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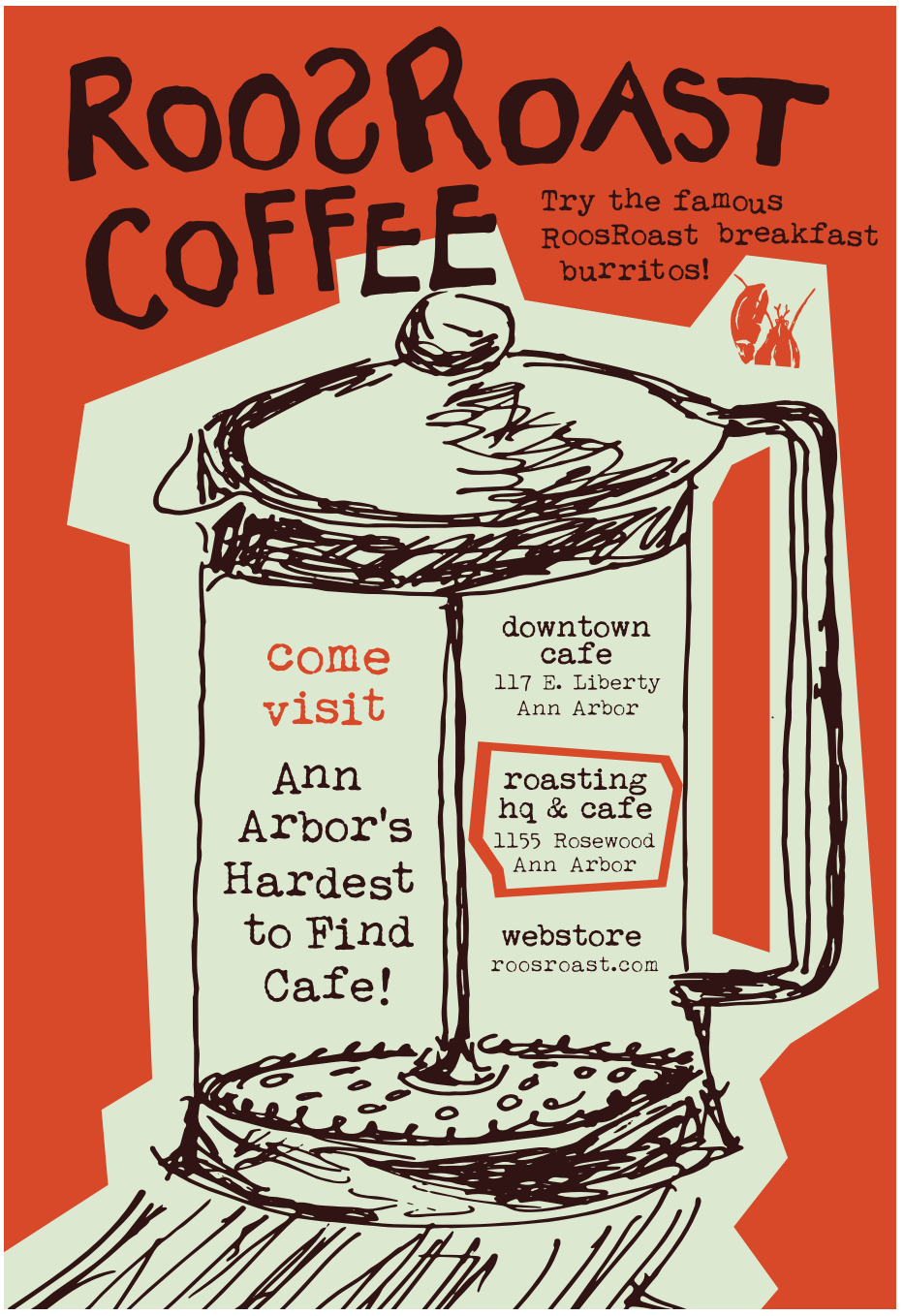
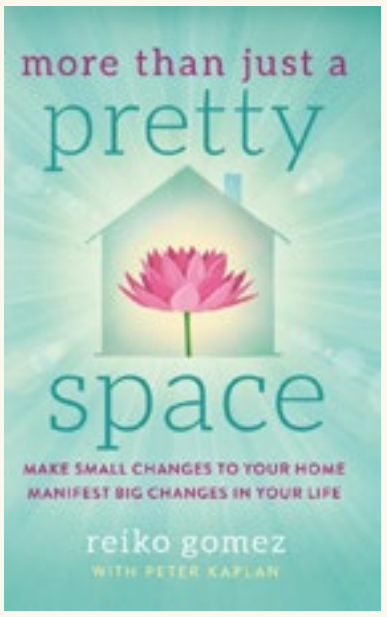


CW Book Picks *of the month*



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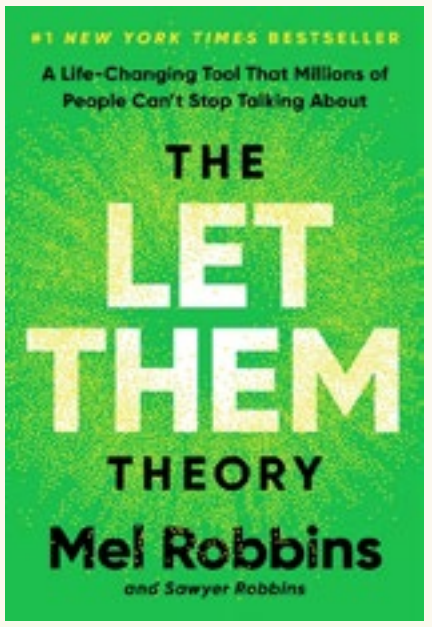

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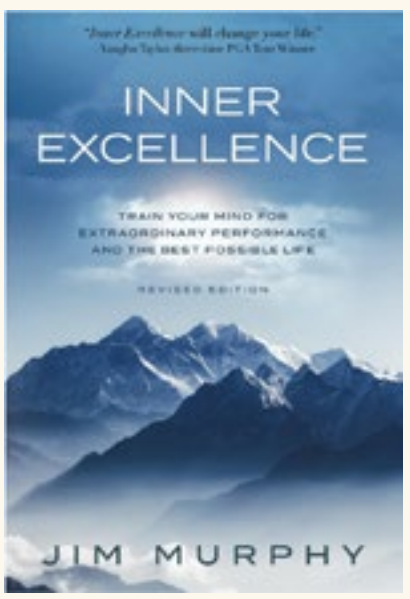

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As a professional baseball player in the Chicago Cubs organization, Jim's sense of worth and identity revolved around his performance. He was obsessed with fame but also afraid of failure, and that fear made him struggle under the pressure to perform.

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A Conversation with Gavia, the Loon

By Peggy River Singer

"The Loon's call has got to be the defining sound of pristine wilderness. There's just no greater sound in the universe to symbolize intact wilderness than the tremolo and the other various calls of the Loon. It's primeval. It takes you back in time."

—Caleb Putnam via mlive

That description resonates deeply with me. Loons have always been one of my favorite birds, mainly because they remind me of times spent Up North with family. Here at Ford Lake in Ypsilanti, Loons often stop over to rest during migration and occasionally we are treated to their haunting but joyful calls. Recently, I was thinking about what to write about for my next column, and Gavia popped into my mind and offered a conversation.

Gavia, laughing with joy: Finally, finally, we meet and speak as equals! My people have waited patiently for this time. We have visited you in many forms, our voice is always part of your own wild heart. I greet you, Sister, with love and pleasure!

Peggy: Thank you so much, I feel so honored!

Gavia: You ask us to speak today of the relationship between our peoples. We loons have always guided, encouraged and taught our human neighbors. The relationships between us are ancient and complex. This is why many humans connect with us easily when they hear our calls.

Peggy: Your calls are so unique and unforgettable. Are they designed to appeal to humans?

Gavia: It would be more accurate to say that loons and ancient humans evolved together—by intention—and in early times we were able to communicate freely. Even today there are many humans who can connect with us, as you do. The frequencies of our vocalizations are far more complex than you might think. We have what you could term "everyday speech", but it is our sacred speech that is so much more meaningful.

When the Northern Lights appear in the sky, it is our time of greatest power. We leave behind our physical forms and soar into the dancing-ground of the Lights. We dive and swim among those beings and use our sacred speech to help them to attune their crystalline songs into their clearest and most profound expressions.

When you look into the night sky and watch the Sky Dance, can you imagine, can you *feel* the exhilaration, the joy, the bliss that resonates through the universe and around this world in many different subtle ways? Those who feel and willingly absorb into themselves these extraordinary energies are blessed with new ways of Being, thinking, and becoming Human to the full spectrum of their abilities.

With kindness, I wish to clarify that those who do not choose that path are in no way "less than" those who do. It is simply a matter of personal preference. I also wish to confirm that looking at images of the Sky Dance can be just as profound an experience as watching it in person.

Humans have much to learn from Loons. Perhaps the single most important thing is this: Dive deep to claim and enjoy that which brings you pleasure and sustenance. So many humans rush through their lives without diving beneath the surface to see who they truly are. It is never too late to begin this exploration.

This talking is complete.

[I watch Gavia lift up his body and ruffle his feathers into place, just before he plunges into the unseen depths.]

Peggy River Singer is a Pleiadian Starseed, Lightworker, all-beings communicator, faerie ally, and lifelong writer. More of her articles and channelings are posted on angelsfairiesandlife.wordpress.com. To request a reading, please call 734-548-0194.

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"I can say beyond a doubt that my reading with Susan has helped propel me in my soul's direction and vocation! She is incredibly accurate and left me feeling more inspired and excited than I could possibly express!" Hallie S., Salt Lake City, Utah

By Lynda Gronlund

Creative Washtenaw, a 501c3 Nonprofit organization supporting the arts in the Ann Arbor and surrounding areas, announced the 11 most recent selections for their PowerArt! Project.

A multi-year project, PowerArt! Installs art on traffic signal boxes in downtown Ann Arbor. More than 500 people voted online to make the final selections from 15 semifinalists selected by a jury of local art professionals, business owners, and community leaders. The jury reviewed 107 artworks submitted by 50 Washtenaw County artists. Winning artists included Mary Murphy, Erin Voss, Janet Kohler, James Lee, Richard Goff, Jill Wagner, Bill Burgard, and Thomas Robertson. A few of the artists had more than one piece selected.

The PowerArt! Project started in 2014 with the first installations going up in late 2014 and early 2015. This is the fourth phase, and there are plans for a fifth. Program manager Margaret Woodard explained that urban beautification projects like PowerArt! reinforce walkable areas and beautify urban places making walking more enjoyable. It also lowers maintenance costs as the control boxes were previously covered in graffiti and flyers. In addition to creating beauty in the downtown area, PowerArt! aims to engage local artists and the public in this shared art and design project. The project is supported by the partnership of Creative Washtenaw, the Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority, and the City of Ann Arbor Public Art Commission with additional support by local public art supporters Larry and Lucie Nisson. The installations are fun and whimsical, popular with locals and visitors alike. Once the project is complete, 50 signal boxes in downtown Ann Arbor will be wrapped.

The pieces selected for 2024 began installation in late 2024 and should be completed by spring of 2025 as weather permits. As some of the original pieces were aging, they are being replaced as well.

More information is available online at creativewashtenaw.org. Questions can be directed to info@creativewashtenaw.org or (734) 213-2733.

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Calendar edited by Kaili Brooks

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Sunday Morning Meditation Sitting hosted by Still Mountain Buddhist Meditation Center • Ongoing Sundays • 10 to 11:30 a.m. • Non guided silent meditation followed by sharing or dharma talk. FREE. For more information contact Ken at (734) 678-0264 or email kenwmorley@yahoo.com.

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Jewel Heart Sunday Talks: Ancient Wisdom, Modern Times, with Demo Rinpoche • Sunday, , April 6, 13, 20 & 27 • 11:00 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. • Join Demo Rinpoche for weekly Sunday morning public talks on a variety of topics that are suitable for newcomers and long-timers alike, followed by a facilitated group discussion based on the morning talk. FREE, donations welcome. For more information, contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Practical Buddhism with Gelek Rimpoche • Tuesday, April 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • Practical Buddhism offers video recordings of earlier teachings by Gelek Rimpoche as an opportunity for some to revisit and as an introduction for others. A panel discussion with Jewel Heart Instructors follows each session. Discussions are not recorded. Sessions review Gelek Rimpoche's 2012 Sunday talks and into early 2013. Online only. FREE, donations welcome. For more information, contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Channeling

Evenings with Aaron & Barbara Brodsky • Wednesday, April 23 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • Evenings with Aaron meets once a month. All are welcome. Aaron has met with us regularly since 1989. In this gathering, Aaron often will address a present world issue and how we can best support the resolution of this issue from a place of loving awareness. Suggested donation: $10-$30-single; $40-$120-all. For more information contact the Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

Remembering Wholeness: Darshan with The Mother & Barbara Brodsky • Friday, May 16 • 2 to 5:00 p.m. • The Mother, channeled by Barbara Brodsky, offers group and personal messages helping to gently release and reveal places where people are a little bit stuck. They reveal themselves when held deeply with love. Suggested donation: $10-$30-single; $30-$90-all. For more information contact the Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

Death and Dying

Death Café with Rev. Annie Kopko & Susan Thompson • Tuesday, April 1• 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. • A discussion group, rather than a grief-support group or a counseling session, with no agenda, objectives, or themes. Hosted on ZOOM. FREE, donations accepted. For more information visit Interfaithspirit.org.

Ann Arbor Death Café with Rachel Briggs, Diana Cramer & Merilynne Rush • Saturday, April 19, May 17 • 11 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. • After a 4½ year hiatus, we meet again at Crazy Wisdom on the third Saturday of every month! Join us in-person for conversation about all things related to death and dying. This is not a grief support group, rather a "death positive" event. Participants join in small and large group discussion with deep listening and sharing from the heart. No agenda, no presentation. Coffee available; bring your own snack. FREE. For more info visit DeathCafe.com.

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Triple Crane Retreat Center is committed to serving a wide, diverse, and supportive community of spiritual seekers and practitioners from our surrounding communities in Southeast Michigan. It is our goal to cultivate a tranquil environment for personal and group retreats, as well a residential and local commuter classes and programs where spiritual seekers with a desire for authentic spiritual growth can relax, unwind and submerge themselves in spiritual practice.

Residential Retreat and Workshop Space Available for Group and Personal Retreats
TCRC also serves as a retreat place for other like-minded individuals, sincere spiritual seeker and organizations offering workshops and retreats for practitioners of their own. Contact us for more information on available residential retreat space.

Work-Exchange and Volunteers Program
Triple Crane is growing it's work exchange program. We are looking for committed and talented individuals to help co-create a thriving practice community. Visit our work-exchange and volunteer programs website page.

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Advance Care Planning Facilitator Training with Merilynne Rush • Wednesday, April 16 • 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. • Learn how to assist healthy adults identify a healthcare advocate and discuss their values and wishes with them. For nurses, doctors, social workers, chaplains, administrators, end-of-life doulas, and all healthcare professionals across the continuum of care. Advance registration required. $265, includes online learning modules. For more information contact Merilynne at (734) 395-9660, email thedyingyear@gmail.com, or visit thedyingyear.org.

Drumming

Drummunity Circle with Lori Fithian • Saturday, April 19 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • Come join us for drumming, singing, and maybe even dancing. All ages welcome, drums provided or bring your own. This is a family-friendly event with a focus on fun rhythm games and community-building activities. No experience expected! FREE, $5 suggested donation. For more information contact Lori at (734) 426-7818 or email lorifithian@mac.com.

14th Annual Drum & Dance Jam with Curtis Glatter • Saturday, April 5 & May 3 • 7:30 p.m. • Drumming is proven to be good for hand-eye coordination and cognition, stress relief, enhancing spiritual joy and improving musicality in all ages! Bring a drum or use one provided. No experience necessary. $5 Donation Requested. For more information contact the Interfaith Center at (734) 972-6098 or visit interfaithspirit.org.

Energy and Healing

Wild Goose Chi Kung with Master Wasentha Young • Tuesday, April 1 & 8 from 6 to 7:00 p.m. OR Thursday, April 3 & 10 from 10 to 11:00 a.m. • The Wild Goose Form, a series of continuous movements that includes the use of imagery, yogic like stretching, touching acu-points, and engaging with universe, nature, and earth energies. Tuesday classes are hybrid and Thursday class are in-person. $215. For more information contact the Peaceful Dragon School at (734) 741-0695, email info@peacefuldragonschool.com, or visit peacefuldragonschool.com.

Healing & Ascension Monthlies Series with Rev. Eve Wilson • Thursday, April 24 • 7:30 to 9:30 • Ascend body, emotion, mind, and soul into unity with Higher Self. Build your new world "muscles" as you learn to co-create your life and health through your new unity. Work in unconditional love for the greater good with Eve Wilson, Master Healer/World Ascension Worker to help the world to heal and ascend. Meet every four Thursdays by teleconference. $300 or $50 each for the full series of six. For more information contact Eve at (734) 780-7635, email evew@spiritualhealers.com, or visit spiritualhealers.com.

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Seeds for the Future — A Local Organic Seed Grower Explains the Importance of the Emerging Seed Movement

From Our Archives

By Erica Kempter

Let's stop and envision an ideal food system. One that gives us the collective ability to feed ourselves sustainably for generations to come; one that provides healthy, safe food for all. A system where most of this food comes from local, organic farms that don't work against nature, but with it; where farmers grow crops from a wide choice of seeds that are uniquely adapted to the climate, soil, and conditions on the farm, and these seeds produce an abundance of nutritious and delicious food.

Miracle in a Package

Seeds are like a miracle in a small package (unless we're talking coconuts). Often I find myself looking down, holding a small collection of seeds in my hand, and I am reminded how each one is living and breathing, just as I am. I know if I take these seeds and tuck them into the soil under the right conditions, those tiny promises will take in the earth's water, bringing about a magical series of internal metabolic changes: the beginning of new life.

I, along with my partner, Mike Levine, own Nature and Nurture, LLC, a local organic landscaping business. Recently, we launched Nature and Nurture Seeds and began selling sustainably grown, heirloom vegetable seeds. Our mission is to be a catalyst for the preservation and innovation of food seed biodiversity in the Great Lakes region.

Seeds are a plant's way of reproducing itself. During the creation of a seed, through the magic of pollination, genetic mixing occurs, making each new seed completely unique. Each seed has the potential to contain new traits that make it survive better in nature or, in the case of agriculture, that make it more beneficial for people. The more our food crops are allowed to make seed (and those seeds are subsequently replanted), the more opportunities there will be for new genetic combinations resulting in increased biodiversity.

Erica Kempter laying out vegetable garden beds for a Nature and Nurture landscaping client

A Collective Heritage

So where did the seeds of our food crops come from? As human beings went from being hunter-gatherers to farmers, our ancestors began to grow plants intentionally, as opposed to hunting or foraging for wild food. At some point, our ancestors began collecting seeds from wild plants and sowing them upon the land. As they did this, they identified new traits and learned to save seeds from the best plants — plants that were easier to grow, produced more food, or were resistant to pests, drought, heat, cold, or flooding. Each selection changed the genetic make-up of the plants, making them better adapted to grow under the conditions in which they found themselves. Humans, dispersed all over the planet, carried out this process, and when we traveled and migrated, we carried seeds stitched under our clothing. These coveted seeds were traded and planted in new places, leading to genetic mixing and, ultimately, to increased biodiversity. (For a great read about the history of our food, see *Where Our Food Comes From* by Gary Nabhan.)

Over thousands of years, these ancient farmers domesticated wild plants — plants that were toxic, thorny, difficult to grow, and unpleasantly bitter — into the astonishing, abundant diversity of crops that we have today. Even though they knew nothing about the science of genetics, our indigenous farming ancestors were well attuned to something we seem to have forgotten: that genetic diversity means food security. They intentionally maintained genetic diversity within crops because they knew that particular plants would produce food during droughts or floods while others would provide nourishment during hot years, cold years, or during pest infestations. It is because of this diversity that we are able to be here today to tell this story; it is precisely because our ancestors had food in their bellies generation after generation; and it is our presence that is living proof that there was not one break in the chain.

The seeds of our ancestors are held in what is known as "the commons." The commons refers to the collective cultural and natural resources accessible to all and include things like air and water. These resources are held in common by the public and are not (or should not be) privately owned. For most of our country's history, our patent laws precluded the patenting of plants, which meant that all plants, seeds, and their genetics were held in the commons. However, the patenting of food plants, which has increased exponentially in the last ten years, has meant the removal of countless seeds from the pubic commons.

In reflecting back at the history of our food, I am reminded that our food crops are the collective heritage of us all. By what right does anyone have to own or control that which we have inherited from our ancestors?

My Seed Education

Growing up on the Old West Side of Ann Arbor, summer usually found me in our family's vegetable garden. Standing barefoot in the garden as the delightful juice of a ripe tomato ran down my chin, I found myself fully embodied in the moment. Somehow the entire sensory experience felt primal in a way that spoke to a deep need for connection to food and nature.

These early experiences stayed with me, and when I entered college at the University of Michigan in 1991, I started my first vegetable garden and began my own organic landscape gardening business. Eventually my interest in organic gardening and food grew and I transferred to the University of California, Santa Cruz, which, at the time, was the only major university to have an organic farm on campus. As a student, I was particularly drawn to sustainable agriculture for its capacity to address social, health, and environmental issues in a tangible, solution oriented way. I returned to Ann Arbor in 1998 and, in 2001, founded Nature and Nurture, LLC, with Mike Levine.

My obsession with seeds began with a "chance" event: my meeting the pre-eminent organic seed breeder, advocate, and mentor John Navazio on an airplane in 2002. While I was perusing seed catalogs, he took notice, leaned

across the aisle, and we became engaged in a long conversation about seeds. I told him what my favorite tomato variety was and he began to explain that, since it was a commercial F1 hybrid, eventually the variety would be dropped from seed catalogs (for financial and/or biological reasons); and since you can't save seeds from F1 hybrids, that would be the end. This was shocking news to me — how could my treasured tomato just disappear into thin air?

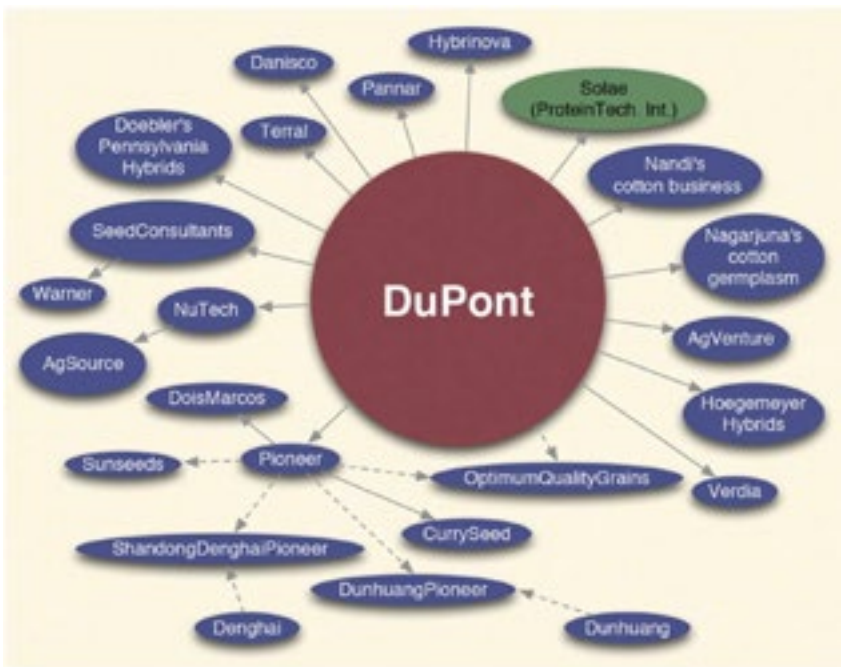
At this point in my life, I already knew that the last hundred years had seen a drastic change in the way people grow food with the widespread adoption of industrial farming systems, leading to consequences that we are still trying to understand. Consequences like diabetes and heart disease caused from the overconsumption of low nutrition, processed foods and negative health effects from chemical exposure. More and more we hear of e. coli and salmonellae contamination, which has sickened and even killed numerous individuals. Not only is industrial farming hurting us, it's also destroying our planet, where it erodes our soil, pollutes our air and water, and drives natural ecosystems into dramatic reductions of biodiversity or complete species extinction. The effects have sent a shockwave through cultures, tearing apart rural communities, destroying culinary heritage, and hurting us socially and psychologically by dismantling the great tradition of celebrating the food we grow around a communal dinner table.

Part of this change has been the switch from open-pollinated (OP) seeds (the kinds of seeds that our ancestors developed) to the widespread adoption of commercial F1 hybrids. As I began to research more about seeds, I learned that F1 hybrids are typically bred in conventional farming systems, meaning they are exposed to significant amounts of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. This breeding process, in effect, creates (selects genes by default for) wimpy plants that require the protection of pesticides and dependency on chemical fertilizers in order to perform their best. Consequently, researchers have found in recent years that commercial F1 hybrid seeds often underperform in organic farming systems when compared to open-pollinated varieties that have been bred in organic farming systems.

Unlike commercial hybrids, "open-pollinated" varieties, sometimes called "heirlooms," have the capacity to be constantly and infinitely selected, bred, and adapted to the food needs of human beings. Hybridization is not bad, in itself, but, since farmers do not save and replant F1 hybrid seeds, this is the end-of-the-line for that hybrid — no evolution, no ability to adapt to the unique and constantly changing conditions, climates, soils, and pests that occur on each farm, in each region. F1 hybrids are evolutionary dead-ends and thus perpetuate the loss of seed biodiversity.

Another consequence of the large-scale adoption of F1 hybrids has meant that, in the U.S., we've essentially dismantled the age-old process of growing, selecting, breeding, and saving seeds; consequently, farmers have lost the knowledge and skills that went with it, organic farmers included.

It also has meant the transfer of enormous resources from OP's into F1 hybrids and the consequential loss of open-pollinated varieties. In the past 100 years, 94 percent of open-pollinated vegetable varieties have been lost; they are literally extinct, and the potentially beneficial genes they contained are gone forever. Due to major changes in the structure of the seed industry in the last forty years, the open-pollinated seeds that remain have been seriously neglected. Up until the 1970s most seed companies were regionally based and independently owned, but starting in the '70s, pharmaceutical and chemical corporations began buying up these seed companies. During this process, many of the open-pollinated varieties carried by these smaller companies were dropped.



This is only part of the graphic from Dr. Phil Howard. See the whole graphic at https://www.cornucopia.org/2013/09/seed-industry-structure-dr-phil-howard-2/

READ THE REST OF THE ARTICLE ONLINE!

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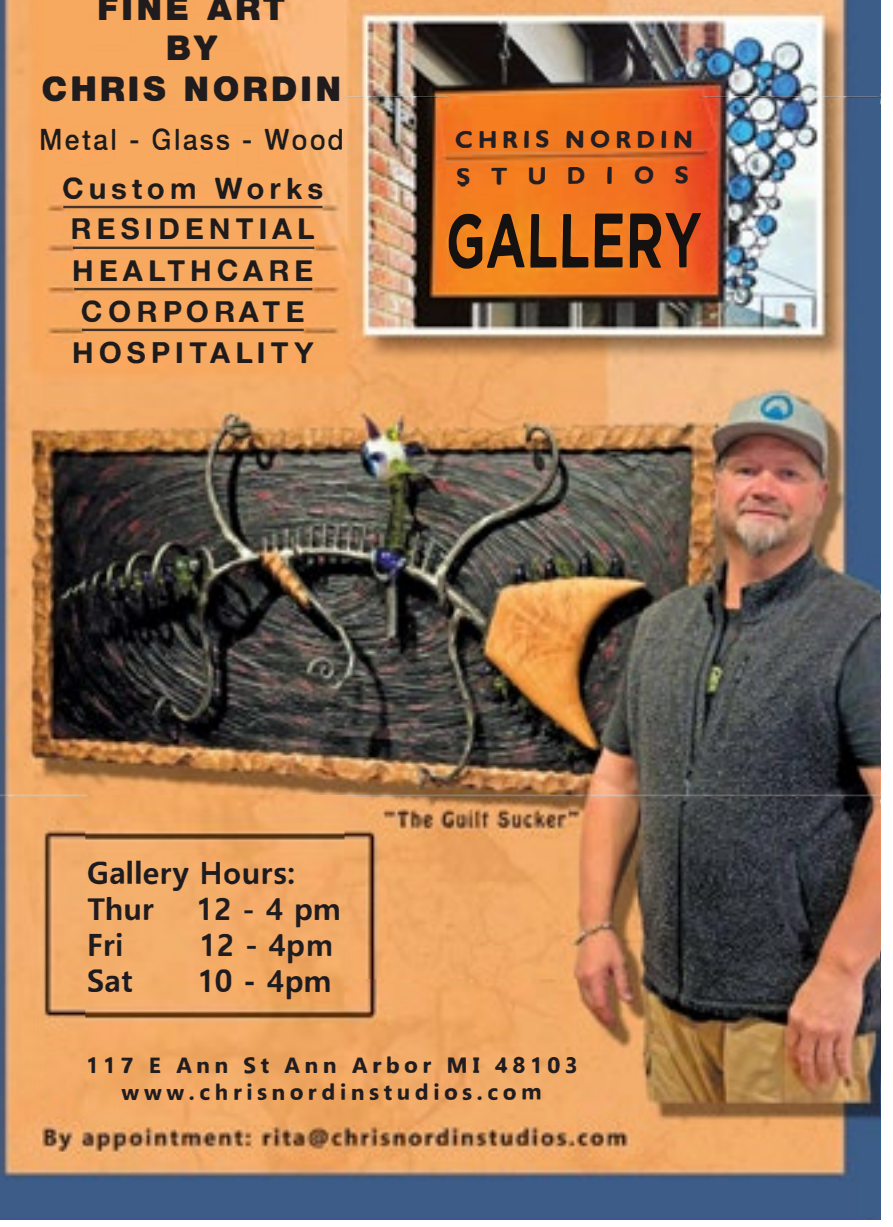

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THE CRAZY WISDOM CALENDAR

Essential Oils

Experience Essential Oils with Yulia Koval • Sunday, April 27 • 4 to 6:30 p.m. • Are you curious about the mysterious world of essential oils? Let's explore these precious plant treasures together in an intimate, hands-on experience where every scent tells a story. Discover: the fascinating history of aromatherapy across cultures, how essential oils are mindfully sourced and extracted, the properties of different oils, the science behind scent and emotional well-being, the art of blending for purpose and pleasure, and practical ways to incorporate oils into daily life. $45. For more information visit yuliasnaturals.com.

Exercise and Fitness

Franklin Method® Fridays with Suzanne Willets Brooks • Ongoing Fridays • 1 to 2:00 p.m. • This evidence-based class will vary in topics from pelvic floor, spinal movement, shoulder girdle, knees, feet, and balancing. A true body-mind experience, we will explore bone rhythms, muscle, fascia, organs, and our nervous system. Come ready to move, learn and explore and see how your mind can change your body. $40 drop in $35 for members. For more information contact Move Wellness at (734) 224-2560.

Self-Care Sunday for Women with Verapose Yoga & Meditation House, HIIT Happy & Pulse Nutrition • Sunday, April 6 • 9 to 10:30 a.m. OR 11 to 12:30 p.m. • We are collaborating for a super fun event, and we'd love for you to be a part of it! The day contains a 30-minute Interval Workout, 30-minute gentle Yin Yoga with a Guided Meditation, and 30-minute nutrition education with a Protein shake. Time for gathering/sharing as a community at the end. $45. For more information contact Verapose Yoga & Meditation House at (734) 808-4007, email veraposeyoga@gmail.com, or visit veraposeyoga.com.

Move With Us: Traeger Mentastics with Paola Bardell • Thursday, April 4 & May 1 • 10 to 10:45 a.m. • This gentle form of movement is low key and focused on helping the nervous system to release restrictive patterns. Wear comfy clothing for movement. Paola will also share with you about the table sessions that she offers. $12. For more information contact the Ann Arbor School of Massage, Herbal, and Natural Medicine at (734) 769-7794.

MOVE Well in Midlife Program with Elaine Economou • Monday April 21, 24, 28, May 1, 5, 8, 12, 15, 19 & 22 • 5:30 p.m. A six-week movement program tailored for women moving through the menopause transition. Build a safe, targeted, and effective strength routine alongside peers in a supportive environment. We've planned everything to help you navigate this transition with confidence. $594. For more information contact office@movewellness.com.

Balance and the Vestibular System with Suzanne Willets Brooks • Saturday, April 12 • 1 to 4:00 p.m. • In this evidence-based Franklin Method workshop, we will explore balance and its connection to your ears, eyes, and nervous system. Balance depends on proprioception and our other senses. We will use movement, touch, exercise balls, and resistance bands to help clarify our senses, create better bone rhythms, and muscular connections. For more information contact Suzanne (734) 323-9664 or email suzannebodywise@gmail.com.

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Festivals and Fairs

Enlightened Soul 2-Day Psychic Fair with Amy Garber • Ongoing First and Third Weekends • Saturday from Noon to 6: 00 p.m., Sunday from Noon to 5:00 p.m. • Join us for a fun-filled day! We have a selection of readers and healers for your enjoyment, along with visiting vendors for shopping! A great way to explore a variety of readings and healings at one time, under one roof. Events include intuitive tarot and oracle card readings, psychic reading, mediums, energy healers, and spirit art. Saturday $5 and Sunday $3. For more information contact Amy at (734) 358-0218, email amy@enlightenedsoulcenter.com, or visit enlightenedsoulcenter.com.

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Film

Free Film & Discussion with Jewel Heart Instructors • Friday, April 11 • 7 to 9:15 p.m. FREE, concessions available. For more information, contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

- **April:** *Melancholia,* 2012. Despite all best efforts, a marriage celebration becomes a fiasco with family tensions mounting and relationships fraying. Meanwhile, a planet is heading directly at earth, threatening the very existence of humankind.

Healing

Client Appreciation Day & 10th Anniversary Open House Celebration with Rob Meyer Kukan and Notes Natural Health • Saturday, April 26 • 2 to 5:00 p.m. • You are invited to a spring Open House to celebrate 7 Notes! Are you a current client? Are you a new client? Are you curious and hope to be a client? This day is for you! Come, check out our offerings, learn about what 7 Notes Natural Health is all about, and celebrate our tenth anniversary! FREE. For more information contact Rob at (248) 962-5475, email contact@7notesnaturalhealth.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

Intuitive and Psychic Development

Focused Mind Meditation: Teleconference with John Friedlander • Sunday, April 6 • 9:00 a.m. to Noon • Development of sustained focused meditation makes it easy to develop a whole new magnitude of psychic skill and healing ability. You will also gain a whole new level of mental clarity and spiritual openness. $15. For more information contact Violeta at (734) 476-1513 or visit psychicpsychology.org.

Psychic Psychology Women's Group: Teleconference with John Friedlander & Gloria Hemsher • Tuesday, April 1 • 7:00 p.m. • For Women Only; meditations concentrating on women's issues relative to biological energies as well as that of the aura. $10. For more information contact Violeta at (734) 476-1513 or visit psychicpsychology.org.

Spring Intensive Webinar & Teleconference with John Friedlander • Thursday, April 10 & Friday April 11 from 7 to 9:00 p.m., Saturday, April 12 & Sunday, April 13 from 10:00 a.m. to Noon & 2 to 4:00 p.m. • New material introduced with continued development of advanced and core techniques, seeking a natural sense of skill in everyday life. Prerequisite: Level 1 Psychic Development class, CD set or by permission of instructor. $275. For more information contact Gilbert at gchoud@yahoo.com or visit psychicpsychology.org.

Massage

TMJ Massage Demonstration with Patti Steven • Friday, April 4 & May 2 • 10 to 10:30 a.m. • Patti Stephen, LMT and long-term dental professional, will offer two demos for guests and students to observe on resolving and approaching TMJ tension. FREE. For more information contact the Ann Arbor School of Massage, Herbal, and Natural Medicine at (734) 769-7794.

Meditation

Guided Meditation for Healing & Growth with Mara Evenstar • Ongoing Thursdays • 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. • Feel more grounded, centered, and embodied while expanding your consciousness and disciplining your mind. These meditations will also support your ability to stabilize and maintain access to your sense of well-being and resilience. Great for beginners or as a complementary experience to more advanced practitioners of other disciplines. Donation based. For more information contact Mara at Mara@evenstarschalice.com or visit evenstarschalice.com.

Meditation on Compassion with Khenpo Tshering Chophel • Saturday, April 5, 12 & 26 • 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. • Meditating on compassion opens our hearts to genuinely care for all beings. Recognizing that everyone shares the wish to be happy and free from suffering, we practice broadening our focus beyond our own wellbeing. Ongoing; participants can attend whenever they wish; no prior meditation experience necessary. FREE, donations accepted. For more information contact Lama Nancy at (734) 649-2127, email lamanancy@karunabuddhistcenter.org, or visit karunabuddhistcenter.org.

White Tara Guided Healing Meditation with Jewel Heart Instructors • Sunday, , April 6, 13, 20 & 27 • 9:30 to 10:35 a.m. • Tara is the mother goddess of Tibetan Buddhism, known for her quick and compassionate activity. White Tara is particularly associated with healing and long life. These guided meditations use visualization techniques to overcome physical, mental, and emotional suffering. FREE, donations welcome. For more information, contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Healing and Compassion Meditations with Hartmut Sagolla • Monday, April 7, 14, 21 & 28 • Noon to 1:00 p.m. • Hartmut Sagolla leads a 30–40-minute guided meditation on a Buddhist theme followed by discussion. Meditations are centered around healing oneself and others and developing compassion. They include concentrated meditation, visualization, and contemplative meditations. FREE. Donations welcome. For more information, contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Nature's Harmony/Earth Day Sound Bath with Rob Meyer Kukan • Friday, April 11 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • Join Rob Meyer-Kukan at Breathe Yoga in Chelsea for a nature's harmony and earth day sound bath. $30. For more information contact Amy at (734) 883-7427, email amy@breatheyogachelsea.com, or visit breatheyogachelsea.com.

Return to Wholeness: Integrating Insight Mindfulness and Yoga with Bilha Birman-Rivlin, PhD, Julie Woodward, MA, RYT-200 RYT-200 • Wednesday, April 23 • 5:30 p.m. • Meditation and yoga practices designed to take us from deep silence into dynamic action and back again to profound stillness. Six-class course meets weekly, April 23-May 21 and June 4, 5:30-7:30pm, at Turner Senior resource Center Gym. Course is free, donations welcome. For more information visit http://stillmountainmeditation.org.

Music, Sound, and Voice

Folk Song Jam Along with Jean Chorazyczewski and Lori Fithian • Wednesday, April 2 • 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. • Bring your voices and/or any acoustic instrument to sing and play—just for fun! Choose from 300+ songs

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spanning genres, from ABBA to Seeger. We project lyrics & chords up on the screen so you can sing and/or play along: All instruments, voices and ages welcome! FREE. For more information contact Lori and Jean at (734) 678-6148 or email folksongjamalong@gmail.com.

Cafe 704 with Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth • Saturday, April 12 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • Live music in a smoke and alcohol-free venue, in person or livestream on Zoom. John Churchill and Peter Madcat Ruth (January 11), Sari Brown (February 8), Emily Slomovits and Friends, a tribute to Joni Mitchell (March 8), Kath Weider (April 12). $10. For more information visit interfaithspirit.org.

Resonant Relaxation: Daytime Sound Bath with Rob Meyer- Kukan • Thursday, April 17 from 1 to 2:00 p.m. • Are you a busy parent who loves sound baths but can't attend an event in the evening? Do you have a job that requires evening hours? Are you just plain busy? This hour-long sound bath is for you! $30. For more information contact Rob at (248) 962-5475, email

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Pagan Spirituality

Witches Night out with Moira Payne • Wednesday, April 9 & May 14 • 6 to 8:00 p.m. • Join like-minded individuals to discuss upcoming events, share topics of interest, and answer questions. This is a judgment-free zone, open to everyone! Come to share, listen, learn, and enjoy the gorgeous new space upstairs at Crazy Wisdom. FREE. For more information contact Moira at (734) 846-2012 or email mopayne@umich.edu.

Peace

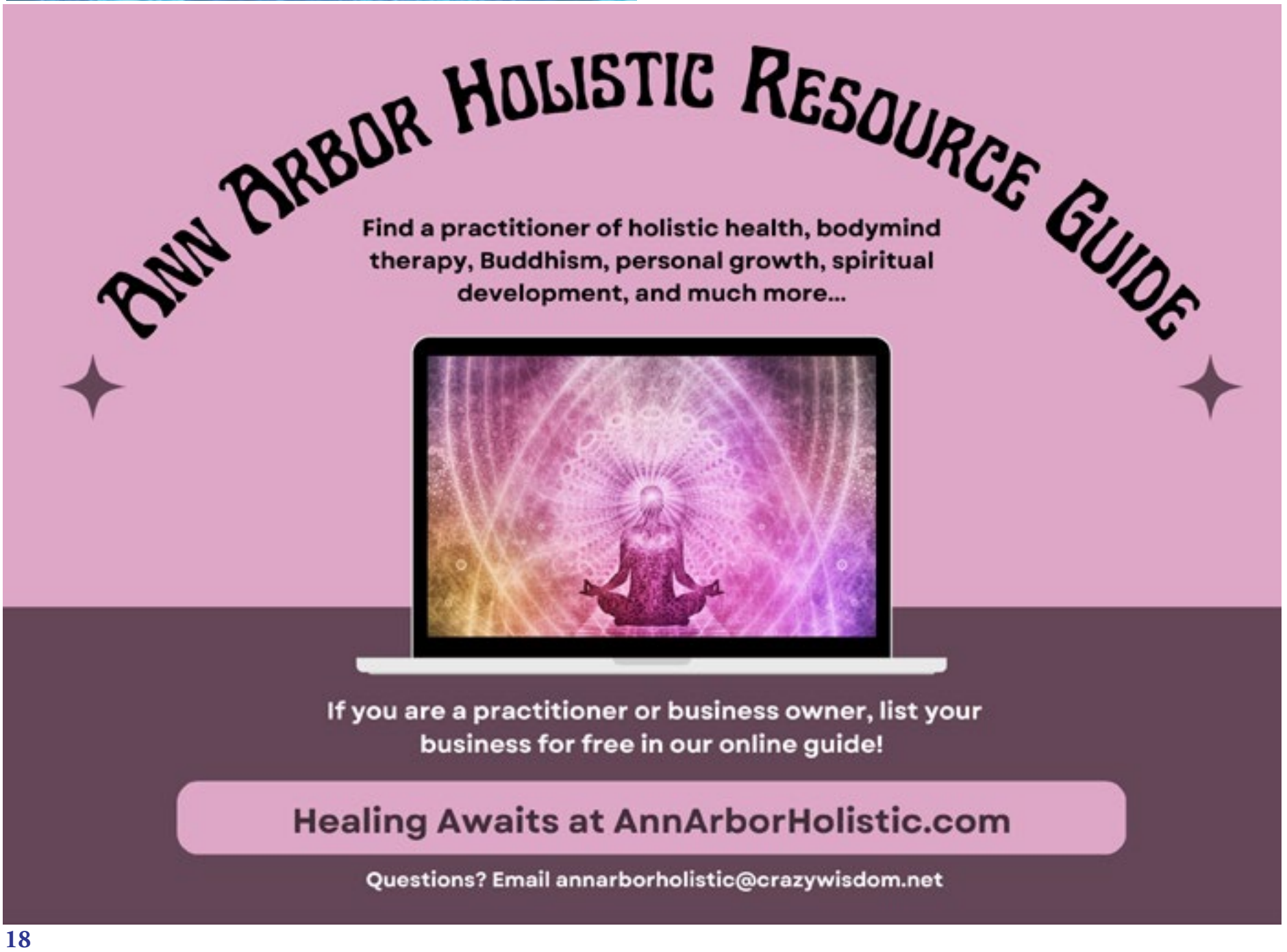
Peace Generator with Craig Harvey • Friday, April 18 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • Join our silent circle as we meditate on and pray for healing, miracles, and peace in ourselves and across the globe. Drop in at any time during this event. Donations gratefully accepted. For more information contact peacegenerator2001@gmail.com.

Personal Growth

Lunch & Learn with the Weber Center • Wednesday, April 9 • 12:15 to 1:00 p.m. • Topics are as follows: February 12: Technology Update. March 14th Oh, My Aching Back! April 9: Spice Up Your Cooking! Bring your own lunch, drinks & dessert are provided. FREE, or $7 with the purchase of lunch from the center. For more information contact the Weber Center at (517) 266-4000 or visit webercenter.org.

Reiki

Reiki Share for Reiki Practitioners and Non-Practitioners with Verapose Yoga & Meditation House • Sunday, April 6 • 4 to 5:15 p.m. • A Reiki share is a gathering where people can give and receive Reiki treatments in a group setting. No experience or attunement necessary; this is open to all and is a relaxed, casual atmosphere to share and create connection. $20. For more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information contact Verapose Yoga & Meditation House at (734) 808-4007, email veraposeyoga@gmail.com, or visit veraposeyoga.com.

Usui System of Reiki Healing, First Degree with Suzy Wienckowski • Saturday, April 5 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. & Sunday, April 6 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.• Reiki is a gentle, hands-on healing practice that promotes balance and harmony of the Body/Mind/Spirit. Reiki is easily learned by all and after initiation by a Reiki Master healing energy flows effortlessly through your hands. Class includes the history of Reiki, treatment form for yourself and others, and individual initiations. $200. For more information contact Suzy at (734) 476-7958 or email suzyreiki@aol.com.

Retreats

Inner Peace Retreat with Song of the Morning Community & Staff • Friday through Sunday, the weekend of April 11 through 13 • Relax into the supportive, collective energy of group meditations, devotional practices, and community meals. Our unique meditative style of hatha yoga is suitable for all levels of experience. Walking trails immerse you in the beauty of nature. Come to unwind, recharge, and reconnect with your inner core of peace. $108. For more information contact Song of the Morning at (989) 983-4107, email office@songofthemorning.org, or visit songofthemorning.org.

Four-Day Spring Retreat (Yongmaeng Jeongjin) with Haju Sunim • Wednesday, April 2 through Sunday, April 6 • This retreat is a silent, intensive period of Zen practice geared toward the experienced student. $240. For more information contact the Zen Buddhist Temple at (734) 761-6520 or email annarborzentemple@gmail.com.

Holy Week Retreat with Patricia Harvat • Sunday, April 13 to Thursday, April 17 • "There's a time to live and a time to die. In between there's a time to remember." *Violeta* by Isabel Allende. Journey with Mary during these sacred days and experience the passion and death of Jesus through her eyes and heart. Single room is $425; double $325: commuter $180. For more information contact the Weber Center at (517)266-4000 or visit webercenter.org.

Building Resilience through Meditation: Spring Retreat with Khenpo Tshering Chophel • Friday, April 18 through Sunday, April 20 • Peace can only come from within, and this weekend will provide tools for maintaining your equilibrium and skillfully handling confusing emotions when the ocean of life tosses you off balance. This is a secular retreat taught by a Buddhist monk.! Attend part or all of the weekend, stay on- or offsite. $225 includes meals, optional overnight accommodations additional. No one turned away for lack of funds. For more information contact Lama Nancy at (734) 649-2127, email lamanancy@karunabuddhistcenter.org, or visit karunabuddhistcenter.org.

Shamanism

Journey Circle with Judy Liu Ramsey • Thursday, April 3 & 17• 7 to 8:30 p.m. • Join other shamanic practitioners to explore life cycles and energies. Pre-requisite: must know how to journey. Instruction is not provided in this circle. $25 per session, $40 per month. For more information contact Judy Liu Ramsey at info@judyramsey.net or visit JudyRamsey.net.

Medicine For the Earth with Judy Liu Ramsey • Wednesday, April 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, May 7 & 14 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • Transform the energy behind toxic thoughts for balance in yourself and harmony in your world. Connect with nature, spirit allies, and the elements to transform and heal yourself, the community, and environment. Suggested reading: *Medicine for the Earth* by Sandra Ingerman. All traditions welcome. Journeying skills not required. Class is online via ZOOM. $400, $200 for repeating students. For more information contact Judy Liu Ramsey at info@judyramsey.net or visit JudyRamsey.net.

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THE CRAZY WISDOM CALENDAR

Spiritual Development

Diamond Gathering: Loving the Truth Part Two with Lou Weir • Saturday, April 5 • 9 to 11:30 a.m. • This teaching is open to the public and accompanies part one. There will be a meditation, teaching, and personal exploration of the topic of loving the truth; how it brings presence to the moment to see what is true for us. FREE. For more information contact Lou at diamondworkmichigan@gmail.com.

Diamond Gathering: Practicing Presence with Lou Weir • Saturday, May 3 • 9 to 11:30 a.m. • This teaching is open to the public. There will be a meditation, teaching, and personal exploration of the meditation and practicing presence, a simple but powerful tool for personal understanding. FREE. For more information contact Lou at diamondworkmichigan@gmail.com.

Tai Chi, Martial Arts, and Self Defense

Chen Style Tai Chi Chuan with Joe Walters • Ongoing Tuesdays, Thursdays & Saturdays • 4 to 5:00 p.m. • Learn basic training and forms of Chen Style Tai Chi Chuan. FREE. For more information contact Joe at annarbortaichi@gmail.com or visit annarbortaichi.com.

Wu Style Tai Chi Chaun with Marylin Feingold • April 6, 13, 20 & 27 • 3 to 4:00 p.m. • Learn the ancient art of meditation in motion with this "soft style" martial art emphasizing relaxation and balance. Drop-in, $5 per session collected at the door. For more information, contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Gentle Qigong with Rory Walsh • Saturday, April 5 & 12 • 10 to 11:15 a.m. • Join us for a harmonizing flow of head-to-toe movement, meditation, and self-acupressure to help you to center and navigate the changing seasons. It is a fun and invigorating self-care practice for all ages and experience levels. $15 Drop-in or $150 for the semester. For more information contact the Peaceful Dragon School at (734) 741-0695, email info@peacefuldragonschool.com, or visit peacefuldragonschool.com.

Writing and Poetry

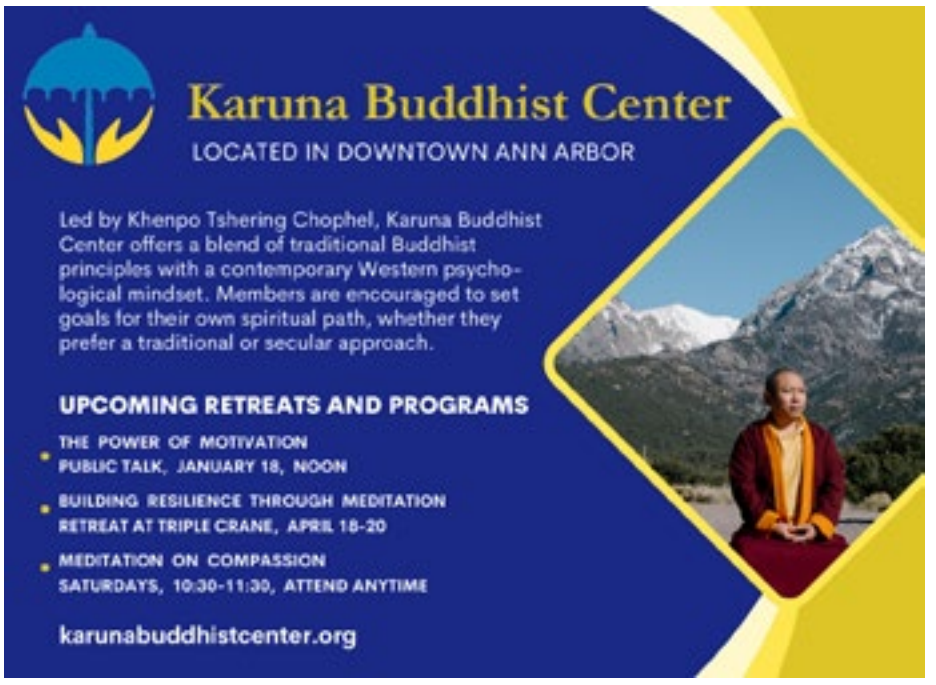
Crazy Wisdom Poetry Series with Edward Morin, David Jibson & Lissa Perrin • Writers Workshop: Wednesday, April 8 • Readings: 6 & April 23 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • Workshop writers present and discuss their poems and fiction. Featured readers perform; open mic follows. Featured readers: Shonda Buchanan, poet & author of memoir *Black Indian* (4/23). FREE. For more information contact Edward at (734) 668-7523, email eacmorso@gmail.com or visit cwcircle.poetry.blog.

Trees Get Along in a Forest: A Hybrid Writing Workshop with Tarianne DeYonker • Saturday, February 22 • 1 to 4:00 p.m. • For eons nature has been teaching about relationships–yes, relationships! In this workshop we'll explore possibilities as we pay attention and open ourselves to learning from her. You're invited to take this time for writing with others, reading what we have written, and learning the strengths that naturally show through our words. $35. For more information contact the Weber Center (at 517)266-4000 or visit webercenter.org.

Yoga

Peaceful Dragon Rising Stretches Master Wasentha Young • Monday, April 7 • 6:00 p.m. • During this session you will learn 15 Qigong (energy work) stretches from head to toe. Designed by Master Wasentha Young this easy to learn routine helps to loosen joints and relax muscles. She uses this routine at the beginning of all her classes. Tuition $20. For more information call (734) 741-0695, email info@peacefuldragonschool.com or visit peacefuldragonschool.com.

Hatha Yoga with David Black • Ongoing Tuesdays • 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. • Beginning and experienced students in the classes learn traditional yoga postures with an emphasis on relaxation, concentration, and breathwork. $12 per session. For more information contact the Zen Buddhist Temple at (734) 761-6520 or email annarborzentemple@gmail.com.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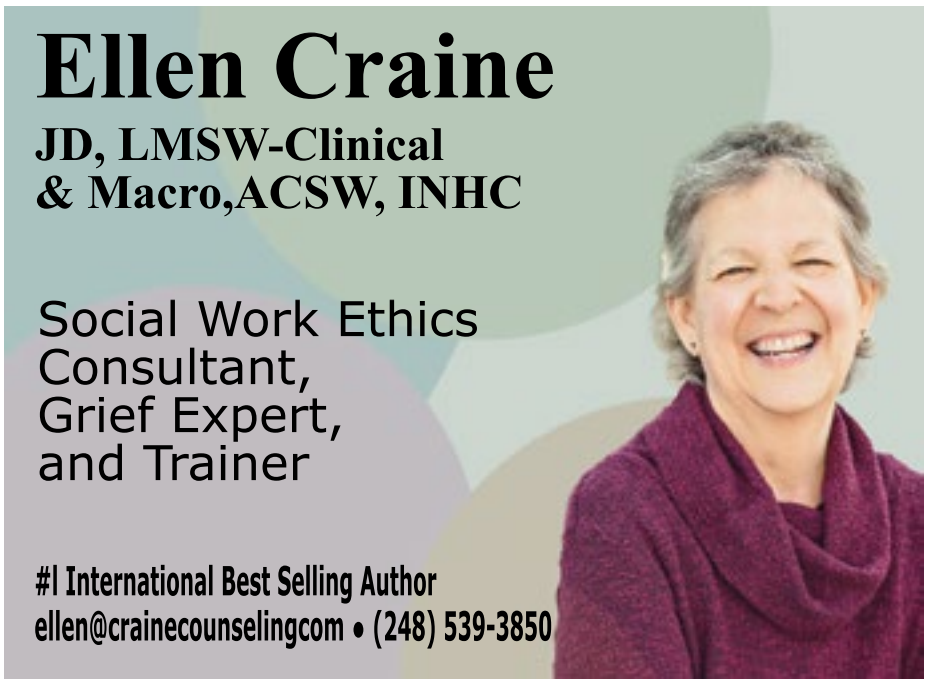

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Hatha Yoga with Sam Liebermann • Thursday, March 6, 13, 20, 27, April 3, 10, 17 & 24 • 9:15 to 10:15 a.m. • On-site only. Sam loves the process of creating and offering safe yet challenging yoga sequencing. She enjoys sharing her love of yoga with all levels of students and is deeply honored to pass the gift of yoga to others. Drop-in $15 per session. First visit is free! Cash or Venmo at door. Bring your own mats. For more information, contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

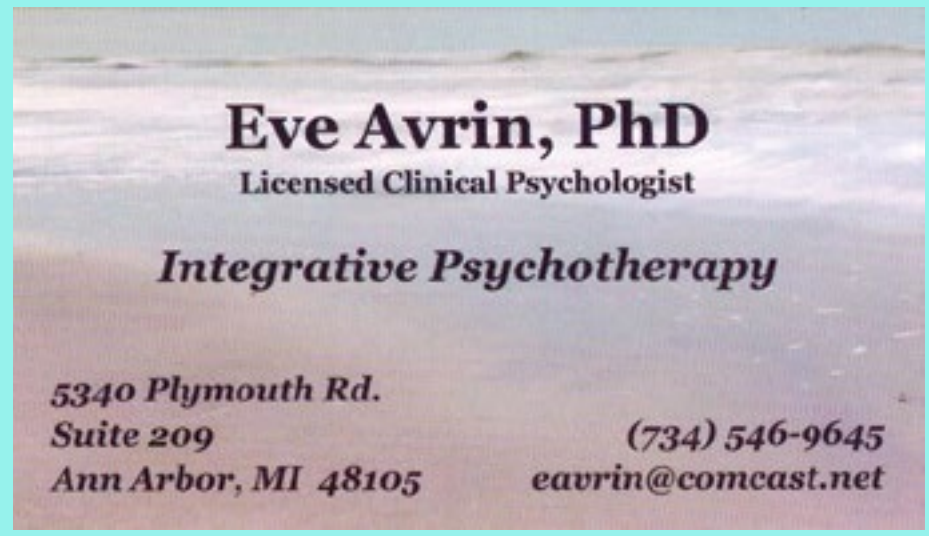
Toddler Yoga with Courtney Fitzpatrick • Saturday, March 1 & May 5 • 8 to 8:45 a.m. • We'll be playing games, trying out some yoga poses, read a yoga-related book and have some fun! This is a wonderfully relaxed time to explore movement and to have some quality time together. $25 per class. For more information contact Verapose Yoga & Meditation House at (734) 808-4007, email veraposeyoga@gmail.com, or visit veraposeyoga.com.

Monthly Moon Flow & Gathering with Courtney Fitzpatrick • Friday, F March 14 & April 12 • 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. • Join us for this special offering to celebrate the full moon, which blends gentle yoga and movement, storytelling, as well as ample time for sharing/connecting and contemplation. $40. For more information contact Verapose Yoga & Meditation House at (734) 808-4007, email veraposeyoga@gmail.com, or visit veraposeyoga.com.

Yoga Workshop: Balance is Not Just in the Legs with Joseph Leary • Saturday, April 12 • 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. • We all want balance, and as we move into spring, we can take lessons from yoga into life. This workshop is about finding balance in both standing and non-standing poses, in our bodies and minds. Some inversions may be taught with support, such as headstand if it is more comfortable. $30. For more information contact The Mix Studios at (734) 845-9105 or visit the-mix-studios.com.

Yoga Workshop: Mudras (Hand Poses) with Joseph Leary • Saturday, May 17 • 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. • Mudras are hand poses, each utilized for a unique intention. They can be used during yoga asanas, or more commonly, during meditation practice. This helps to set the intention of your practice as well as create energy connections through the hands and arms. $30. For more information contact The Mix Studios at (734) 845-9105 or visit the-mix-studios.com.

Resources for Conscious Living



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Rotary Club of Ann Arbor Presents

SECOND ANNUAL ANN ARBOR ROTARY YOGA RETREAT

By Jody Tull

The second annual Rotary Yoga Retreat promises to be a rewarding day of self-discovery. The day-long retreat includes a vegetarian breakfast and lunch, offers participants the ultimate investment in self-care healing practices that will spring you into feeling energetic while unveiling your very best most lovely life.

Experience the buzz behind the practice of yoga, learn why most medical doctors are on board recommending the practice of yoga to patients, and discover easy to master techniques (to take back home with you) that are easy to learn, interesting, fun, and powerfully healing. Everyone is welcome. All can benefit. The only requirement is a sincere willingness to, without judgement, drop into curiosity and wonder.

The concept of a Rotary Yoga Retreat was launched in a Rotary Club in Saginaw Michigan, by members who happened to be physicians. They all strongly recommend the practice of yoga to their patients, as powerful pro-active preventive practices to promote excellent mental and physical health and well-being.

Our Program Chairman, Sam Kottamasu, MD is a retired Clinical Professor of Radiology. He submitted a proposal in 2024 to spearhead the first Ann Arbor Rotary Yoga Retreat launch in our club, after retiring to Ann Arbor 2 and a half years ago.

About 50 people attended last year.We think it's important to hold this event to educate participants about the health and wellness benefits available through yoga and meditation, the growing realization in Western medicine that the benefits are genuine, and particularly that this is an intervention not requiring drugs or expensive treatments.

Our yoga retreat is approved for 6.5 CE units for Physical Therapists. We are offering five full scholarships on a first come basis. Those requesting a scholarship should contact Dr. Sam Kottamasu at skottam761@gmail.com.
Retreat is on Saturday, May 10th. Learn more online.

Early bird before April 15 $ 60
After April 16 $ 70
Donor (includes 1 registration) $ 250
Sponsor (includes 2 registrations) $ 500
Gold Sponsor (includes 4 registrations) $ 1000
Platinum Sponsor (includes 6 registrations) $ 1,500
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Mail to: PO Box 131217, Ann Arbor, MI 48113.
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Cooking with Lisa

By Lisa Viger-Gotte

For more wonderful recipes from Lisa, visit her column online!

Enjoy the savory, spring goodness of rosemary garlic roasted new potatoes. A crispy, flavorful vegan side dish that pairs perfectly with any meal. Simple and delicious!

Ingredients:

- 1 pound new potatoes, washed and halved
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon easy peasy plant-based parmesan (optional, see bonus recipe to make your own!)
- 2 cloves garlic, finely minced
- 1 teaspoon dried rosemary (or 2 teaspoons fresh rosemary, chopped)
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- Fresh parsley, chopped, for garnish (optional)

Instructions:

Preheat your oven to 425°F (220°C).

In a large mixing bowl, combine the halved new potatoes, olive oil, parmesan, minced garlic, and dried rosemary. Toss to coat the potatoes evenly with the oil and seasonings.

Season the potatoes with salt and black pepper to taste and toss again.

Spread the seasoned potatoes in a single layer on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat.

Rosemary Garlic Roasted New Potatoes

Roast the potatoes in the preheated oven for about 25-30 minutes, or until they are golden brown and crispy on the outside. You can stir them once or twice during roasting for more even cooking.

Remove the roasted new potatoes from the oven and, if desired, garnish with fresh chopped parsley and more parmesan for a burst of fresh flavor before serving.

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Letters and Hope

By Katherine Munter

“To send a letter is a good way to go somewhere without moving anything but your heart.” -Phyllis Theroux

When I was barely old enough to climb up into a chair, I would pull myself up at my grandfather’s desk and marvel at the keys of his typewriter. I enjoyed watching symbols magically appear as the metal letters rose up and pressed the inked ribbon into the paper. I would push them, just a few at first, and then I’d gleefully smash many at once, sticking the keys up into a tangled cluster. I’d slowly pull them back down, one by one, getting my fingers a bit inky. I’d imagine they were back in their beds, waiting to be called upon, and call upon them I did. Slowly, one by one, and then back they’d go to their pile up.

My grandfather would gently tell me it wasn’t good for the keys to tangle them, and I tried to listen. When I reflect upon those moments, I remember his patience and kind smile as he encouraged me to learn to type words. I’d initially go slowly and give the letters time to get back in place before pressing other keys. Then energy and excitement would creep into my fingers and I’d send my little letter friends into a twisted pile once more.

My grandparents and father came to this country after surviving a concentration camp and then a series ofdisplaced persons camps. My grandfather would spend long hours composing letters to politicians. He wanted to use what power he had to try to defend those without voices, to make sure no one else had to experience such atrocities again.

Sometimes his letter writing involved searching for loved ones who he’d become separated from during the war. Other times, he would write to share stories and connect with friends. My grandfather kept letters he’s received from friends in a carved wooden box; their messages were a gift he could open again and again. I keep my own letters in a cardboard shoebox that I’ve carried with me through a number of moves. It’s powerful to hold the words of loved ones, to touch handwriting, as unique as a voice, and remember.

While walking through an antique market recently, I spotted a typewriter that was similar to the one my grandfather used. I noticed that on this keyboard, the letter H was crooked. H was the first letter of my grandfather’s name. It’s also my children’s middle initials, as they were named in his honor. H is also the beginning of the word hope, the powerful energy we can draw upon when we speak our truth and work together toward a better future. When we send out our thoughts, hope quietly assures us that they’ll be received.

It can feel like we are powerless and stuck when confronted with chaos. Our thoughts can be pulled in different directions, our emotions feel tangled and jumbled, and we lose track of our own voice. In isolation and apathy, we allow space for others to assert control and carve our fate. Connection can be a healing balm that lifts us and guides us back to strength.

We are all stronger together, and our words are powerful. Who would you like to reach out to?

Katherine Munter, clinical psychologist, art therapist, and founder of Creative Life Therapy, an Ann Arbor practice of art therapy and integrative wellbeing. www.CreativeLifeTherapy.com.

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Crazy Wisdom Poetry Series

Hosted by Edward Morin, David Jibson, and Lissa Perrin

Second and Fourth Wednesday of each month, 7-9 p.m.

Second Wednesdays, 7-9 p.m.: Poetry Workshop. All writers welcome to share and discuss their poetry and short fiction. Sign-up for new participants begins 6:45 p.m.

Fourth Wednesdays, 7-9 p.m.: Featured Reader(s) for 50 minutes. Open Mic reading for 1 hour. All writers welcome to share their own or other favorite poetry. Sign-up begins at 6:45 p.m.

All sessions are virtual and accessible through Zoom. Email cwpoetrycircle@gmail.com for Zoom link.

Featured readers

April 23 - Shonda Buchanan is author of the memoir, ***Black Indian,*** and of forthcoming books: ***The Lost Songs of Nina Simone*** and ***Children of the Mixed Blood Trail***. She is a California Arts Council Established Artist Fellow, a PEN Emerging Voices Fellow, and Oxfam Ambassador. She teaches English at Western Michigan University. shondabuchanan.com

Crazy Wisdom Poetry Circle
The Poetry Series is open to all. There is never a charge.
https://cwcircle.poetry.blog/

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April

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11th The Revelators

18th Lilly Macphee

25th The Lucky Nows

7:30 - 9:30pm

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Where can you pick up a copy of The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal?

You can find The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal in many places around Ann Arbor and in surrounding areas. Here'a a sampling of places around town where you can grab a copy of the current issue:

Ypsilanti:

Cross Street Coffee
Evenstar's Chalice
This, That, and Odder Things
Twisted Things
Unity Vibrations Kombucha

Plymouth, Livonia & Canton:

Earth Lore
Gateway Farm
Yoga Pratice Center
Wellness Center of Plymouth
Zerbos

Saline:

Andrea Kennedy Center for Innovation and Education
Eleanor's Sweets and Sodas

Chelsea & Dexter:

Agricole
Breathe Yoga
Community Farm of Ann Arbor
Triple Crane Monastery
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Jackson & Lenawee County:

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Essential Energies
Irish Hills Wellness & Acupuncture
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Ann Arbor:

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Argus Farm Stop
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Booksweet
Bring Your Own Container
Castle Remedies
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Clark Professional Pharmacy
Complete Chiropractic
El Harissa Market Cafe
Enlightened Soul Center
Healing Hands Physical Therapy
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Kerry Town Market
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THE HAPPINESS MIRAGE AND THE JOURNEY TO CONTENTMENT

By Sherris Cottier Shank C.Ht.

Have you ever attempted to catch the wind in your hand or contain the beauty of a sunset in a jar? The wind slips through your fingers, and the sunset vanishes before your eyes because the wind and the sunset come and go in their own natural cycle and cannot be caught or held.

The same is true for happiness. It ebbs and flows, appears and disappears, and moves through our lives with a maddeningly quixotic nature. Just when we think, "I'm happy!" life takes a turn, and a different emotion appears.

Yet, as human beings, we seem to be compelled to pursue this elusive quality. Most of our wants and desires stem from the belief that they will make us happy. In Western culture particularly, this desire often manifests as a longing for more: more possessions, vacations, money, and security.

We convince ourselves that "I'll be happy when... I have a new romance, a better job, more money." Yet, when we stop to assess our life after achieving our goals, we may find ourselves wondering why we are still not happy.

The truth is that happiness is an emotion that can be present at times and absent at others. This occurs partly because all feelings, including happiness, are fluid, and are often triggered by external events beyond our control.

Yet, all too often, we find ourselves trapped in the pursuit of happiness, perpetually wanting, and endlessly searching, which leaves us with a continuous experience of lack. Just as we can never catch the wind, bottle the sunset, or control external events, we cannot catch and hold happiness. When we try, we risk falling into a sense of frustration and deprivation.

Why Not Aim For Contentment?

Contentment is not an emotion; it is a state of being—an overall sense of existence that shapes how we experience life from day to day. It arises from a deep inner knowing that "I have all I need; all is well in my world."

According to Daniel Cordaro, Ph.D., founder and CEO of the nonprofit Contentment Foundation, the term "contentment" originates from the Latin word "contentus," which means "held together" or "intact, whole." Initially, "contentus" referred to containers like cups, buckets, and barrels. Over time, the term evolved to describe individuals who feel complete within themselves.

"Contentus," states Cordaro, raises the question, "How whole do you feel inside? How complete are you as a human being?"

Like all emotions, happiness is temporary and reactive, leaving us constantly wanting more. Contentment, however, is accessible even in times of chaos because we are drawing only on our own inner state of well-being. It is consistent, resilient, and enduring.

While happiness is fleeting and often out of reach, contentment can be cultivated, practiced, and welcomed into our lives.

Creating Contentment

To be content requires effort for sure, but the rewards are profound. The most significant work required to develop contentment is healing old emotional wounds. No one goes through life without collecting emotional wounds, and few of us have the ability and support to heal them at their origin.

Whether we experience trauma, abuse, neglect, repression, or simply a lack of love, the wounds remain in the subconscious mind until they are processed and healed. Burying, ignoring, numbing, or denying these wounds unfortunately leads to suffering that can last for years or your whole life.

It is worthwhile noting that these wounds also derail happiness. It is difficult to be happy when you're traumatized. However, happiness can remain elusive even after healing emotional wounds, while contentment can be steadily cultivated and nurtured.

The reward for healing our emotional wounds is discovering our authentic selves. Beneath the walls we've built to protect ourselves, and the coping mechanisms we've developed to survive, lies our true essence, our soul-self that has been waiting for us to set it free. What a magnificent gift!

After healing our wounds, we can cultivate practices, habits, perspectives, and attitudes that preserve and celebrate our freedom to be our truest selves. We no longer need to fight battles from the past or wrestle with demons who have long overstayed their welcome. We can enjoy and cherish life on our terms. This is contentment.

Final Thoughts

Ironically, living in contentment creates the ideal conditions for experiencing happiness. Thus, even if we consider contentment a stepping stone to a final goal, it remains our best course of action.

Living in contentment, however, is exceptionally fulfilling in itself. When happiness emerges, it is a delightful accent to an already rich experience.

Sherris Cottier Shank is a psycho-spiritual hypnotherapist based in Birmingham, and the author of The Peace of Mind Blueprint. Shank specializes in emotional healing and spiritual growth, working with local clients in person and national and international clients via Zoom. Her greatest joy is witnessing clients heal their wounds, develop new empowering beliefs, and embrace a life they adore. The office is located at 261 East Maple Birmingham, MI., 48009. To contact Shank, call (248) 842-7783 or visit birminghamclinicalhypnotherapy.com. You can find out more about her book at ThePeaceOfMindBlueprint.com

LIFE ISN'T ABOUT WAITING FOR THE STORM TO PASS.
IT'S ABOUT LEARNING TO DANCE IN THE RAIN.
—VIVIAN GREENE